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DECISION
MAKING

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	Introduction
RULES	Discussing the need for rules in any society.
ENVIRONMENT	Making realistic choices about local environment.
NOISE	Thinking about the problem of excessive noise.
GLOAT	Communicating and showing our feelings.
STRESS	Understanding stress and making decisions.
RELAX	Learning about ways to relax, discussion.
LEISURE	Making choices about use of leisure time.
FITNESS	Deciding about personal fitness.
ADVERTS	Learning about advertisers persuasion tactics.
FAVOURITES	Thinking about preferences.
FEELINGS	Recognition of both positive and negative feelings.
RESPONDING	Recognising own ways of responding to others.
RIGHTS	Discussing personal 'rights'. Have you any?
SMOKING	Making decisions about smoking.
ALCOHOL	Making decisions about alcohol, or thinking about it.
JOYRIDING	Talking about opinions, right and wrong.
PRESSURE	Learning about methods of applying pressure.
VALUES	Thinking about rights and wrongs, forming values.
DRUG ABUSE	Thinking about illegal substance use and abuse.
MOODS	Recognising different factors in moodiness.
FRIENDS	Discussing qualities of friendship and making choices.
PARENTS	Thinking about reactions, choices and co-operation.
GOALS	Thinking about and planning for the future.
IMAGE	Considering own image and possible improvements.
DATING	Thinking about attractive attributes in both sexes.

Decision making is about choosing. Choosing about how we live, our values and the way we believe that we should behave in the society in which we live.

Developing a system of personal values will be dependent upon our own experiences of home, school, environment and community. Agents of authority will also help to shape our value system by guiding, or imposing, their beliefs through rules and regulations. Society will often limit the choices available to people through a system of punishment and condemnation.

No particular value system is perfect for everybody. People have to make their own decisions, which will often be dependent upon their own personalities, from the choices available to them.

This process of decision making begins at an early age. The toddler who refuses food and spits it out is making a decision and a statement. The relatives of a person who is ill, with no hope of recovery, have to make the terrible decision of when to have the life-support systems turned off. Everyone makes decisions everyday, from the toothpaste they use to the bus they catch.

Certain values remain constant. Truth, honesty, bravery, kindness and many others are continually being upheld in most societies.

The way to a safe, happy and successful life is to learn to make the 'right' decisions, and to change those decisions which turn out to be 'wrong'.

To do this, young people have to be given the chance to make mistakes in a non-threatening situation. They have to be given the opportunity to practise decision-making. They need time to think about the decisions they are going to make, time to discuss them with friends, parents, or other concerned adults, and material which provides them with these necessities.

Thankfully, schools no longer impose a total, non-thinking discipline on their pupils and then expect them to make their own decisions as adults. Schools, teachers and other concerned adults now recognise that they have a part to play in helping young people make sensible decisions and formulate personal value systems.

This set of project/assignment sheets will provide the basis for teachers and pupils in the area of decision making. The tasks deal with many useful, but hypothetical situations whereby the pupils can practise this necessary skill. It also provides the teacher with opportunities for meaningful discussions.

Everywhere you go you are inhibited by rules and regulations.

1 Think about the rules in operation at your school.

Write your opinions on the following:

- a. Is it important to have rules? Why?
- b. Which rules do you think are unnecessary, or silly? Why?
- c. Which rules do you think are the most important?
- d. Write down two rules that you think would be a sensible, or important addition to the school rules.
- e. Which two rules would you repeal, or eliminate? Why?

2 Working in a small group of friends or classmates, talk about each other's responses. Write down the two most important points made by the group.

3 In a whole-class session, have every group leader, or scribe, write down their group's two most important points on a large sheet of paper, or on the chalkboard. Discuss the merits of each group's contribution. Try to be positive and refrain from nasty comments, or put-downs, even when you disagree.

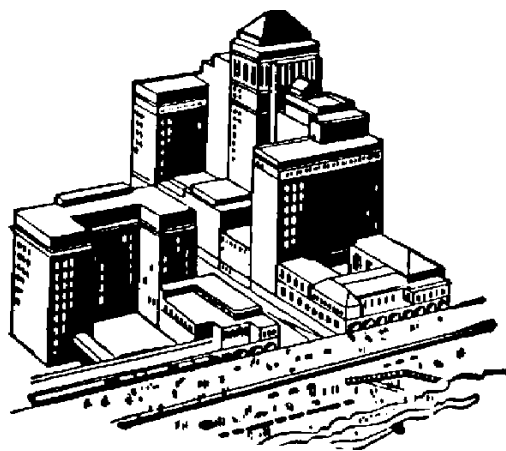
4 When the class has reached a reasonable consensus, have a scribe make a class list of the agreed items for display.

5 Working on your own, make a list, or chart, of the school rules that you have recently disobeyed.

Make some good resolutions for the future, or be prepared to suffer the consequences! Remember 'not knowing' is not a valid excuse, it is your job to find out!

Do you live in a pig-sty? Some people are lucky enough to be able to live in pleasant surroundings. Others are not so lucky.

1 How would you assess your own environment?



2 Write down six good things about your own environment and six things that are not so good.

3 Get together with some friends, or in a set group, and compare your responses with the responses of other members of the group. Make a list of similar responses. Why do you think that some members of the group made similar responses to your own?

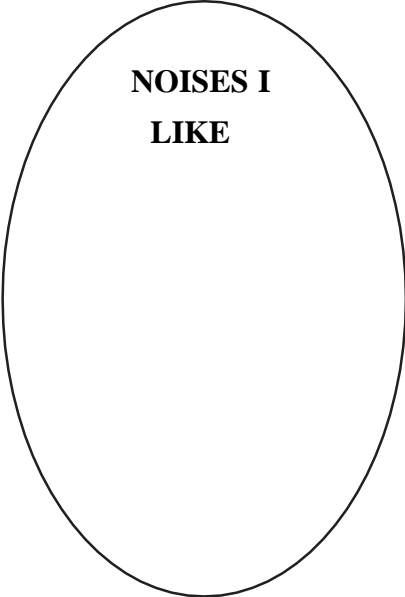
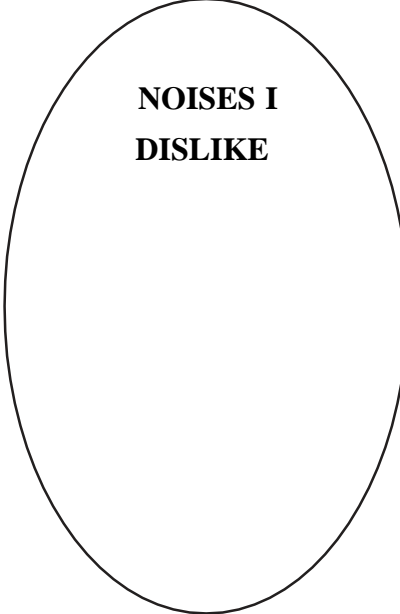
4 Still in your group, think of ways whereby your environment could be improved. Be realistic and remember to consider the cost. List the ideas of your group.

5 Have a class discussion about the improvement ideas listed by every group. Put every group's ideas into an ordered 'class list' with the simplest to achieve first and the hardest and most expensive last.

6 What about your bedroom at home? Think about ways that you can improve this, your personal environment. At least, if you determined to keep it tidy, your parents would stop nagging you and you could find things when you want them. Think about it, it's your environment!

Excessive noise is a modern problem. People are always complaining about noise and noisy activities. Remember that prolonged excessive noise can permanently harm your ability to hear.

1 Make two lists, one of noises you like to hear and one of those noises you dislike.

 <p>NOISES I LIKE</p>	 <p>NOISES I DISLIKE</p>
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2 Compare your responses with the responses of your friends. How many were similar to your own?

3 Discuss everyone's lists in a whole-class session. Make two large class lists of everyone's responses.

4 Using the class lists, think up ways of combating the disliked noises. Be realistic and sensible.

5 Make a class list of good resolutions for reducing excessive noise.

6 What do you think are your personal 'rights' when you want to play music loudly? Discuss personal rights in class.

7 Do you think that you should have to consider other people around you? Why?

Too often, we show our feelings when we communicate with others.

1 Give instances of when you have used the following and how you felt when they were used against you.

	WHEN YOU USED IT	HOW YOU FELT
WINKING		
SNEERING		
SMILING		
SHRUGGING		
GLOATING		
GRINNING		
NODDING		
POINTING		
FROWNING		
SIGHING		
LAUGHING		

2 Make two lists, one for those items you enjoy and one for those you dislike.

3 Write down which items you dislike your parents, or your teachers using and say why.

4 In a class session, talk about unpleasant tones and mannerisms that people sometimes use when communicating.

5 Think about your own ways of communicating and how they can be improved.

If you understand the signs of stress then you can do something to overcome it.

1 Fill in the chart by writing down when you have experienced these symptoms of stress.

	WHEN HAVE YOU SUFFERED THESE SYMPTOMS?
Your heart beats faster.	
Your mouth suddenly feels very dry.	
You get a dull and steady headache.	
You feel nervous or uptight.	
You seem to lose your temper for no reason.	
You're always irritable.	
Your hands and feet feel clammy.	
You can't stop giggling over silly things.	
You feel you want to cry, and over nothing.	
Your stomach aches or has sharp pains.	
You Slur, or miss words out when talking.	

2 Working in a small group, or with friends, talk about your responses. Were any of the others similar to yours?

3 Have a class discussion on ways of overcoming feelings of stress.

Everybody needs to have time to relax and unwind from the stresses of each day.

1 Working in a group, talk about all the different ways of relaxing that you can think of. Give each method a value of 1-10.

2 Make a list of the methods which you consider the best, i.e. those valued from 8-10.

3 Have a class session and make a class list of every group's assessments. Display this list.

4 Discuss the availability of various methods of relaxing in your own area. Make a list of 'how, where, when and cost' for everybody.

5 Fill in the chart on your own preferred methods of relaxing:

METHOD	WHEN YOU WOULD USE IT.

6 Which methods would you prefer to do:

- a. by yourself; b. with a friend; c. in a group?

Everybody needs some leisure time each day. It is a time of renewal, rest and preparation for the next day's work.

1 How do you use your leisure time? Fill in the chart. Remember to include the time spent on each.

ACTIVITIES YOU PREFER TO DO ON YOUR OWN:

--

ACTIVITIES DONE WITH A FRIEND, OR FRIENDS:

--

ACTIVITIES DONE WITH FAMILY:

--

If you are a normally healthy person, only you can decide how fit you are going to be. It is your decision whether you are fit or just a slug!

1 Write down any health problems that you experience, e.g. quickly out of breath, easily tired during activity, and any others.

2 Working with friends, or in a group, compare your problems with theirs. Make a list of the most common problems.

3 Fill in the chart with details of the amount of exercise you have in a typical week:

DAY	TYPE OF EXERCISE	PLACE	TIME SPENT	WHO WITH?

4 Do you think that you have enough exercise to really keep fit and healthy? Write down a good resolution and try to keep it!

Manufacturers use advertisements to try and persuade you to buy their products. Advertisers use several different techniques to entice you into buying the product.

1 Bring to school several different advertisements that you have cut out of magazines. Try to make them as varied as possible.

2 Sort them out into piles using the following categories:

- a. Humour - where a funny situation, person or animal has been used;**
- b. Pathos - where babies, children and baby animals have been used;**
- c. Scientific - where the product has been scientifically tested;**
- d. Sexual - where sexy looking men and women are used to promote the product;**
- e. Fantasy - whereby you can achieve your dreams and fantasies by using the product;**
- f. Fear - where you will never achieve success if you don't use the product;**
- g. Fame - famous people use it so it must be good!**
- h. Freebies - where you are offered a prize if you buy it, (2 for the price of 1, or a free gift etc.);**
- i. Slogans - where the catchy slogan or jingle is used to help you remember the product and thus buy it.**

3 Compare your piles of adverts with those of your friend, or members of the group. Did you manage to find at least one for each category?

4 In your group, discuss how you choose one product instead of another. Make a list of your group's reasons for choosing.

5 Which technique by the advertisers do you find the most attractive? Why?

6 Have a class session and discuss whether advertising should be controlled, or not. Think of cigarette advertisements at sporting fixtures as one example.

7 Which is your favourite advert on television? Which category does it fall into? Why do you like it?

8 Make a class graph on the six or eight favourite TV adverts.

FAVOURITES

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It is easier to make choices and decisions if you really know what you like and dislike.

1 Fill in the chart with your likes and dislikes:

ITEM	LIKE	DISLIKE
SONG		
BOOK		
COLOUR		
SPORT		
HOBBY		
FOOD		
DRINK		
PLACE		
OUTING		
SCHOOL SUBJECTS		

2 Compare your responses with your friends or group. How many of you had similar responses? Why do you think that happened?

3 Talk about people's different choices in a class session.

When changing from childhood to being an adult, our feelings become a very important part of our lives. Some feelings are positive and others are negative.

1 Write down some occasions and circumstances when you experienced the following feelings:

FEELING	CIRCUMSTANCE
ANXIETY	
EXCITEMENT	
ENVY	
JEALOUSY	
CONTENTMENT	
LOVE	
ANGER	
DISGUST	
REJECTION	
CONFUSION	

2 Talk about your responses with a friend. Have they experienced similar feelings in similar situations?

RESPONDING

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The way people respond to their negative feelings often determines the type of people they are. How do you usually respond? Be honest!

1 Fill in the chart about these kinds of response. Do you:

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	RARELY	NEVER
SWEAR OR USE FOUL LANGUAGE				
CALL OUT ROTTEN NAMES				
LISTEN TO MUSIC BY YOURSELF				
DISCUSS YOUR FEELINGS WITH A FRIEND				
HAVE SOME VIGOROUS EXERCISE				
CRY, WEEP AND WHINE				
READ A BOOK				
EAT SWEETS AND CHOCOLATE				
USE INTIMIDATING THREATS				
ACCUSE PEOPLE WITHOUT REAL EVIDENCE				
HAVE A THINK AND THEN SLEEP				
USE UNPLEASANT PUT-DOWNS				
PLAN TO GET BACK AT THEM				
HAVE A QUIET CUP OF TEA OR COFFEE				
SPREAD NASTY RUMOURS ABOUT THE PERSON				
GO FOR A LONG WALK, AND THINK				
IGNORE THEM FOR DAYS, OR WEEKS				
TELL YOUR PARENTS OR ANOTHER ADULT				

2 Think about it. Can you become a pleasanter person to be friends with? Remember it's your choice!

Many people become very irate whenever they feel that their personal rights have been infringed. Do people really have any personal rights? Think about it!

1 Fill in the boxes with a person's rights.

Everybody's Rights:

Teenager's Rights:

My Personal Rights:

2 Working in a small group, make a list of the group's six most important rights.

3 Have a class discussion on every group's six most important rights.

4 Make class list of the six most important rights from the group lists. Underline those you already have and put circles around those still to be achieved.

To die or not to die? We all do it sooner or later, but why do it earlier than necessary and often in great pain? Live a Lot!

1 Why do you think people smoke?

2 Why is it better not to smoke? Remember, it's your decision!

3 How can people (you) learn to stop! Remember, it's your decision!

It is not a crime to drink alcohol once you are old enough. You should check the age requirement in your area. However, it is stupid to drink too much and become irresponsible.

You have to think about this and make some decisions for yourself.

1 Answer the questionnaire as honestly as you can.

When do you think that it is okay to drink alcohol?

How much do you think that you can drink safely?

What methods would you use to stop people from 'drinking and driving'?

Some countries and religions ban the use of alcohol altogether. What is your opinion of this and why?

Do you think that the punishments given to drunk drivers who cause accidents are too lenient? Why?

What punishment should be meted out to people who drive vehicles that are not properly maintained and safe?

Do you think that young people should be allowed to drink alcohol in pubs? Why?

What do you think of people who too often get drunk? They are not a pretty sight!

2 Have a class discussion about the responses of everyone in the class. Have you decided only to ever drink in moderation?

Have you ever been tempted to go 'joyriding' with a friend?

1 Write down what happened, (If you haven't, write down what you think of those who do):



2 Give your opinion on the following:

- a. Is it right or wrong to go joyriding? Why?
- b. Should the joyriders be punished? Why?
- c. What would be a suitable punishment for joyriding?

3 Write down as many problems for the owner of the car as you can think of:

4 What would you do if you are joyriding and the police are following you? Why?

5 Ask a local policeman to visit your class and talk to you about the accidents and deaths caused by reckless joyriding.

You could also ask someone from the hospital to tell you about some of the injuries suffered by joyriders.

Peer pressure is when people of about your own age try to persuade you to participate in actions you dislike, or you know to be wrong.

1 Write down any experiences you have of being pressured in any, or all of the following ways.

Being bribed.

Being threatened.

Being cajoled.

Being bullied.

Being flattered.

Being put under obligation.

Being frightened of possible consequences.

Called something unpleasant which makes you want to 'show' them.

Within a group, being ordered to do something.

Being given continual, nagging persuasion.

Being made to feel guilty, or 'letting the group down'.

2 Working in a group, talk about 'peer pressure' and what you think about it.

3 Have a whole class session on combating unpleasant peer pressure.



As people mature into adulthood, they find that they need to develop a set of personal values to live by.

1 Working in a group, discuss the rights and wrongs of the following. Make a list of your group's opinions. You may think that some of the items are not important. Say so and give reasons.

WEARING SCHOOL UNIFORM

DRIVING WITHOUT A LICENCE

TELLING LIES

USING CONTROLLED DRUGS

PUTTING PRESSURE ON PEERS

DRINKING ALCOHOL

PAINTING GRAFFITI ON WALLS

COPYING IN EXAMS

WRITING ON LAVATORY WALLS

HACKING INTO COMPUTERS

SWEARING

SMIFFING VOLATILE SUBSTANCES

COPYING COMPUTER OR VIDEO PROGRAMMES

SHOPLIFTING

TAKING TIME OFF AND CLAIMING SICKNESS

USING FOUL LANGUAGE

PERSUADING OTHERS TO TRY CONTROLLED DRUGS

JOYRIDING

TAKING MONEY LEFT AROUND AT HOME

2 Have a class discussion on every group's opinions.

3 Make a class list of a set of values for everyone to try and observe. Put the most important value at the top of the list and exclude the items the class felt were unimportant.

4 Copy down the class list of agreed values so that you remember them! Add any important personal values that haven't been discussed by the class.

Everybody is forever been told that it is wrong and very harmful to abuse your own body by taking illegal drugs.

1 Have you ever tried taking an illegal substance (drug)?

2 If your answer is 'yes', how were you persuaded to try?

THESE TWO QUESTIONS ARE PRIVATE, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REVEAL YOUR ANSWERS. If your answer was 'no' go on to Question 3.

3 Give the reasons why YOU think young people start using drugs:

4 Do you think that you would be able to say 'NO' firmly if you were offered drugs by your best friend, or gang leader?

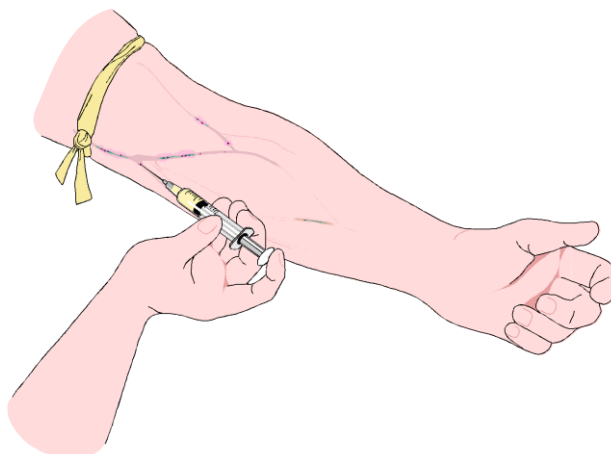
5 Try to say why you think that young people and adults should not take illegal drugs.

6 Do you think the police or government should be involved in any way? Why and how?

7 What punishment do you think would be suitable for:

a. The drug-user

b. The drug-pusher



Every teenager experiences bouts of moodiness as they grow into adults. Often, we don't know why we feel moody at a particular time.

1 Answer these questions as best you can:

What makes you in a bad mood?

How do you usually respond to people when in a bad mood?

How often do you feel moody in a week?

What do your friends do when you are in a bad mood?

How do your family behave towards you when you are moody?

How do you cure yourself when in a bad mood?

Have you ever tried: reading a book, listening to music, going for a walk, watching TV/video?

Which works for you?

What do you do when you feel in a super mood?

What things put you in a good mood?

How does your family respond to you when you are in a good mood?

2 Compare your responses with friends or with your group. How many people had similar responses to your own? Why do think this happened?

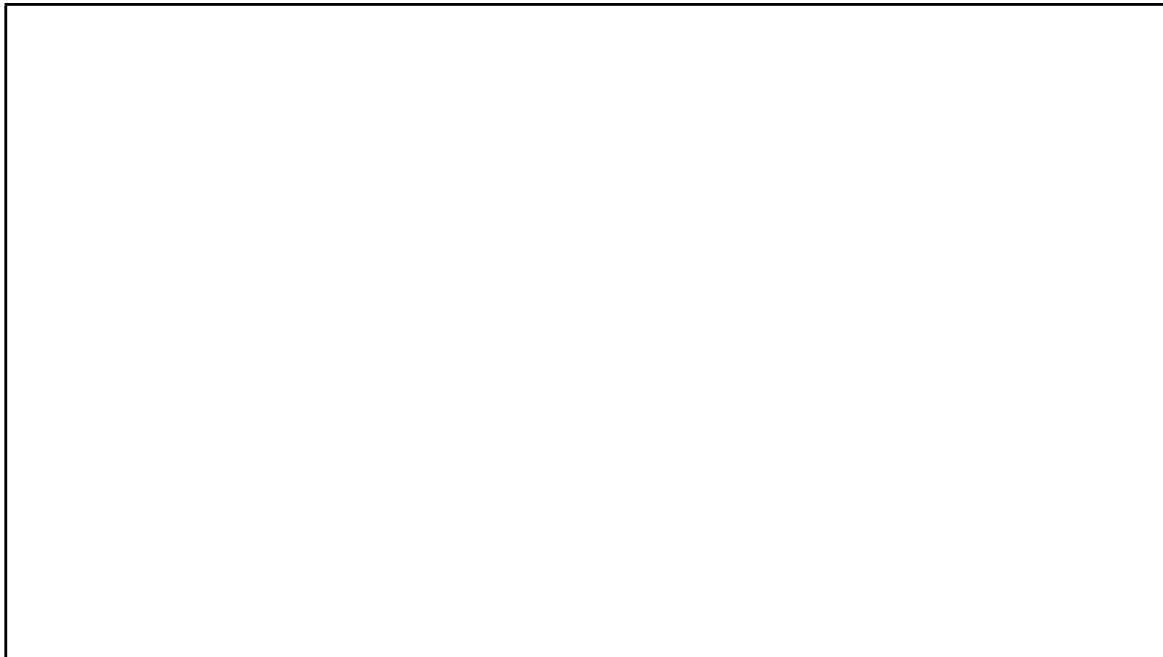
3 Have a great class 'chat' session about everyone's mood experiences.



In a new situation, we may look at someone and think that he, or she, would make a good friend, but then that person doesn't seem interested in you. How do we choose friends?

1 Write a quality that you would look for in a person who you would like to have for a friend. Don't worry about what others think, you may be able to see good qualities that others can't.

QUALITIES I LOOK FOR ARE:



2 Which do you think is more important, loyalty or good looks? Why?

3 What will you do if you know that your friend has done something terribly wrong?

4 Write down something that you don't really like about your best friend. What could you do about it?

5 Ask your friend how they think that you could become a better friend?

Sometimes our parents make us mad! They're unfair, unreasonable and totally impossible! Everybody feels like this at some time or another.

1 Try to answer the questions as honestly as you can. You can keep your responses private if you wish.

When did you last have a row with a parent?

What was the row about?

What happened?

How did you react?

How did your parent react?

Do you think that it was fair or unfair? Why?

What job do you have to do at home which you hate more than anything?

Do you think that you should to do jobs at home? Why?

How do you react when your parents nag you to do your jobs?

How do you think that some of the problems can be resolved? Be realistic, your parents have rights too!

What do you like best about living at home?

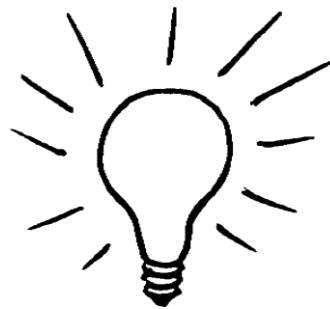
2 Think about it. Talk about your problems with friends or concerned adults, or your parents!

If you haven't any goals in life you might as well be dead! These goals can include being someone, or doing something famous, or they can be about the ordinary achievements such as a 'happy' life.

1 Write down at least three things that you can do now, but couldn't manage three years ago.

2 What would you really like to do when you grow up? Be honest with yourself, but don't stop dreaming!

3 Think about it, then write down how you think that you might be able to achieve your dream.



4 What would be the best way to begin?

5 Being more realistic, write down some things that you could really achieve in the next two, or five years.

- a. At school
- b. At home
- c. In sport
- d. As leisure

6 What will you have to do to achieve the responses to question 5?

The first impression is often the lasting one. If you want to be confident in your dealings with others you have to think of your image.

1 Check yourself by answering the questions as honestly as you can!

2 Compare your responses with a friend and see if they agree with you! Can you improve your image?

My body is very clean.

I use deodorant regularly.

I remove stale deodorant before going to sleep.

My fingernails are clean.

My fingernails are kept well trimmed or filed.

My clothes are washed regularly.

My clothes are well cared for.

My hair is clean and healthy.

My combs and brushes are washed regularly.

My teeth are well-brushed at least twice a day.

I always wash my hands after using the lavatory.

I eat lots of fruit and vegetables.

I spurn chocolates and sweets.

I refrain from picking at spots and zits.



The change from hating the opposite sex to wanting to be friends with them can be very sudden. Almost overnight the opposite sex becomes very attractive. However, sometimes it is very difficult to know if the people who attract you are also nice to be with.

1 Make two lists about the qualities which you think are attractive.

<p>QUALITIES IN THE OPPOSITE SEX THAT ATTRACT ME</p>

<p>QUALITIES OF THE SAME SEX THAT YOU THINK MIGHT ATTRACT THE OPPOSITE SEX</p>

2 Compare your lists with the lists of your friends, or group members. Did any of you list similar attributes?

3 Have a class discussion about being attractive to others. Make a class list of the most important attributes listed by the groups. Were there any surprises?